



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPRINGFIELD MAN SENTENCED FOR FIREARM VIOLATION FOLLOWING JURY CONVICTION

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Springfield, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for being a felon in possession of a firearm.

James W. Bell, 36, of Springfield, Mo., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this morning to six years and five months in federal prison without parole for being a felon in possession of a firearm.

On Sept. 22, 2003, **Bell** was convicted by a federal jury of being a felon in possession of a firearm. The federal jury found **Bell** guilty of illegally possessing a .22 caliber Davis Industries Derringer on April 25, 2003. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Bell** has a 1986 criminal felony conviction for robbery in Mississippi County, Ark.

Bell was initially arrested on April 25, 2003, at the Missouri Hotel, a shelter located at 420 E. Commercial St., in Springfield. Prior to his arrest, **Bell** walked into the office of one of the case managers that day and asked to speak to David Bodine, the shelter's coordinator of residential and social services, about an urgent matter. **Bell** laid the Derringer on the case manager's desk, with it pointed in her direction, and demanded to speak to Bodine, Graves said.

When Bodine arrived at the office, **Bell** pulled the Derringer from his pocket and pointed the handgun directly at Bodine's chest, Graves said. Bodine, a former police officer, quickly disarmed **Bell** and the case manager called the police. Bodine, who kept **Bell** in the office until police officers arrived, also found a box of .22 caliber ammunition in **Bell's** pocket.

Bell was originally charged with illegally possessing the firearm in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on June 4, 2003.

The case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney James J. Kelleher. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Springfield, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow